

Fact Sheet 19 – Localism Act 2011

The Localism Act 2011 received Royal Assent in November 2011, with ministers hailing it as triggering “the biggest transfer of power in a generation, releasing councils and communities from the grip of central government”.

Summary of the Act

The Act devolves greater powers to councils and neighbourhoods, giving local communities more control over housing and planning decisions. The Act introduces key provisions for councils, housing, planning and regeneration, as well as three specific community rights.

Council Provisions

The provisions relating to councils and their new or enhanced powers include:

- Giving councils a general power of competence, meaning they will be freed to do anything provided they do not break other laws
- Allowing councils to return to the committee system of governance and allowing referendums for elected mayors in certain authorities
- Abolishing the Standards Board regime, and introducing a criminal offence of deliberate failure to declare a personal interest in a matter
- Giving residents the power to instigate local referendums on any local issue and the power to veto excessive council tax increases
- Allowing councils more discretion over business rate relief
- Providing new powers to help save local facilities and services threatened with closure

Housing Provisions

These cover factors such as:

- Abolishing the requirement to have a Home Information Pack
- Reforming Housing Revenue Account system

- Providing a new form of flexible tenure for social housing tenants, and giving councils the power to limit who can apply for social housing
- Allowing councils to use private rented accommodation discharge their duties to homeless people
- Abolishing the Tenant Services Authority
- Amending how social tenants can complain about their landlord, and improving the ability of social tenants to move to different areas

Planning and Regeneration Provisions

Covering issues including:

- Abolish Regional Spatial Strategies
- Returning to where Secretary of State takes the final decision on major infrastructure proposals, and abolishing the Infrastructure Planning Commission
- Amending the Community Infrastructure Levy, so some of the revenue will be available for the local community
- The introduction of neighbourhood plans to enable local people to influence the development of new houses, businesses and shops

Community Rights

The Act introduces three key community rights:

1. Right to Challenge, which is designed to make it easier for groups to run local services
2. Right to Bid, which will give residents the opportunity to take over local assets like shops or pubs
3. Right to Build, which will help communities bring forward proposals for development they want, such as homes, shops, or meeting halls.

Please see our other [Fact Sheets](#) for details of each of these.

For further details about how Pulse Regeneration can help, please contact us.

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